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Modest Plea

For the Due

REGULATION

OF THE

PRESS,

In Answer to several REASONS
lately Printed against it.

Humbly submitted to the Judgment of Authority.

Quæ est peior mors animæ, quàm libertas erroris?
August. in Epist. 166.

By FRANCIS GREGORY, D.D. and Rector of
Hambleton in the County of *Bucks.*

L O N D O N,

Printed for R. Sare, at Greys-Inn-Gate in Holborn.
MDC XC VIII.

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REGISTRATION

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In Answer to several of the above

TRINITY COLLEGE



A MODEST PLEA

For the Due

REGULATION OF THE PRESS, &c.

SECT. I.

Good Reader,

IT is not long since I accidentally met with a Printed Paper, Entitled, *A Letter to a Member of Parliament, shewing that a Restraint on the Press is inconsistent with the Protestant Religion, and dangerous to the Liberties of the Nation.* This Title at the first view did startle and make me wonder; for I could not imagine how the Contents of this Letter could possibly justify such an Inscription.

But whether this Letter were really sent, or only pretended, and by whom, I cannot tell; for the Writer of it thought it an act of Prudence to conceal his *Name*, as well as his *Opinion*. But if he be not one of the worst sort of Hereticks, I mean a *Socinian*, it is his great misfortune, and no small

fault, that he hath given his Reader just cause to think him so. For,

1. This Author treats our Common People with extraordinary Civilities, he pleads for the full liberty of every Man's Conscience; and tells us, that every Man hath as much right to Communicate his Thoughts to his Neighbour, as to think them himself; he tells us, that every Man is to judge for himself, even in the controverted Points of Religion, as well as the ablest Divines of our Church. Nor can we wonder that a *Socinian* should thus flatter the Vulgar; for they, who design to instil their *Opinions* into the *Heads* of Men, are concerned in Policy by fair words and courtship first to insinuate *themselves* into their *Hearts*:

2. This Author treats the Church of *England* with incivility and scurrilous Language; he loads its Governours with several Calumnies, which are no way deserved; he calleth them, *Imposers upon the Consciences of Men, Tyrants, Lords of the Peoples Faith*; but 'tis not my business to wipe off his unjust Reproaches, but to answer his groundless Arguments. But however, 'tis not strange that a *Socinian* should thus bespatter the Clergy of our Church, to render us odious to the People, because they know that our Divines are the most able Men to defend those great *Articles* of our Creed, which they oppose; and to confuse those detestable *Doctrines*, which they promote, but will never be able to maintain, so long as the Church of *England* shall continue as well stored with learned Men, as now it is. But in the mean time, they make it their business to disparage and vilifie our Divines, in hopes that our People, disesteeming our *Persons*, may shew the less regard to what we plead in defence of Truth.

3. This Author sheweth himself yet more manifestly to be a *Socinian*, because according to the known Practice of that sort of Men, he highly magnifies *Humane Reason*, exalting it far above its proper *Sphere*, advancing it to that sublime and sacred Office, which, as now it is, it can never discharge.

For in that Preliminary Discourse, which he premiseth as an Introduction to the main Body and Substance of his Letter, he tells us, that God hath given Man, *His Reason, which is his only light, not only to discover that there is a Religion, but*

to distinguish the True from the many false Ones. He tell us again, p. 15: *That God hath given Men no other Guide, but their Reason, to bring them to happiness*; and yet again, p. 17. he saith, *That the Peoples common Notions are the Tests and Standards of all Truths*.

Now, my own Reason, such as it is, tells me, that all these Assertions are as false, as bold and daring; for, what greater Encomiums could have been given to Humane Reason, were we still in the state of *Innocence*? though in that state the Reason of Man might shine, like the *Sun* in its full glory, not a Cloud interposing; yet by, and since, the fall of *Adam*, the Common Reason of Mankind is become like the *Moon* lying under, though not a Total, yet a very great Eclipse. *Solomon*, the wisest of Men, hath left our Reason no better Title than this; *the Candle of the Lord*. 'Tis not *Prov. xx. 27.* styled a *blazing Torch*, but a *Candle*, which is but a *diminutive* light, and so much the less, because 'tis full of *Snuff*, 'tis clouded with *mists* and fogs of ignorance; and in nothing more, than in matters of Religion.

True it is, that this little light of Nature, being well attended to, is enough to discover to us some Truths, which are a sufficient ground for *natural* Religion; the Reason of Man, exercising it self in contemplating the Works of Creation and Providence, is enough to convince him, that there is a God, and that this God ought to be worshipped; but there are some other Truths, absolutely necessary to Salvation, which the most improved Reason of Man, without some other help, could never have discovered. In all Cases, the Reason of Man is, *lumen sine quo non*, a light, without which we can discern no Truth at all; but yet 'tis not a light, by which we can discern every Truth, which doth concern us. Our Lord hath truly said; *The light of the Body is the Eye*, and *Matth. vi. 22.* yet this Eye, be it never so clear and strong, without the help of some other Light beside it's own, can see very little or nothing; so here, the light of the Soul is its Reason, and yet this Reason, without some other assistances, in matters of Religion can discern but very little.

There were amongst the Heathens many sober, vertuous, and industrious Moralists, Men of raised Intellectuals, Men of excellent Parts both Natural and Acquired; and yet 'as
to

Rom. i. 21.

to the Matters of Religion; they shewed themselves mere Sots and Dunces; they became, as *St. Paul* saith, *vain in their imaginations*. They exceedingly doted in their Notions concerning the Nature, Will, and Worship of God; there are several religious and necessary Truths, whereunto their own Reason, though much improved, was, not only a perfect *Stranger*, but a professed *Adversary*; the Doctrine of the *Creation* stands opposed by that known Maxim, which their Reason entertained as an undoubted Truth, *ex nihilo nihil fit*, out of nothing, nothing is or can be made. And as for the great Doctrine of the *Resurrection*, Men of Reason look'd upon it, as *Celsus* speaks in *Origens*, *de administrat. & universitat.*, as a thing impossible, and abominable, and according to these Notions they took *St. Paul*, who preached this glorious, but difficult Doctrine, to be no better than a vain babler.

Orig. adv.

Celsus, l. 5.

p. 24.

But whence might this gross Ignorance of theirs arise? How came it to pass, that Men so acute and lucky in searching and finding out many secret Mysteries both of *Art* and *Nature*, should be so dull and unhappy, as not to apprehend the Mysteries of *Religion*? Doubtless the Reason must needs be this; their own Understandings, though exercised to their utmost Ability, could not inform them better for want of some other and clearer Light. And what was their Case, would have been ours, had not God enlightened and blessed the Christian Church with *Divine Revelation*.

But withal, this great Blessing of *Divine Revelation* doth not *exclude*, but *require* the very utmost Exercise of human Reason; for we must employ, not only our Eyes or Tongues, but our Understandings in reading the Word of God; it must be our great Endeavour by the use of all proper means, to find out the true Meaning of what we read; and when upon good Grounds we are satisfied that the right Sense of such or such a Text is this or that; though the Matter therein delivered be above the reach of our Reason, yet the same Reason will oblige us to believe it as an undoubted Truth, because that God, who cannot lie, hath so revealed it. And this, I think, is all, which humane Reason hath to do in Matters of Faith and Worship, unless it be to oblige us to the Practice of what we know and believe.

To conclude this Subject, our Lord saith of himself, *I am the light of the world*, the same thing he said to his Apostles too, *ye are the lights of the world*, so they were not only by their Holy Example, but by their Holy Doctrine too. Why else doth the Apostle mention the Glorious Light of the Gospel? The Light of Reason is but as the Light of a Glow-worm; the Light of the Law is but as the Light of a Star; but the Light of the Gospel is as the Light of the Sun, a very glorious Light indeed.

Now, if this be true, if Christ himself, if the Apostles of Christ, if the Gospel of Christ be so many Lights differing in Number, had not this Author strangely forgot himself and his Bible, when he told the World in his printed Paper, that the Reason of Man is the Light, nay, the only Light, which God hath given him to distinguish the true Religion from the false ones; and again, that God hath given to Men no other Guide, but their Reason, to bring them to Happiness; and yet a third time, that the People's common Notions are the Tests and Standards of all Truths. If these three Propositions be true, or any one of them, I do confess, that the small Light of my own Reason hath not yet enabled me to discern any difference betwixt the clearest Truths, and the grossest Errors. And verily the exposing such notorious Falshoods to the view of the World by the help of the Press, is a very strong Argument, why its Liberty should be restrained. But to go on.

S E C T. II.

THE main Arguments, which this Author pleads for an universal Freedom of the Press, are drawn from these two Topicks; *First*, From the great Usefulness of Printing, which hath been so very beneficial to the Christian Church. *Secondly*, From several great Inconveniencies, which, as he saith, would follow, were the Press once more restrained and limited.

I. This Author pleads the great Usefulness of Printing, as an Argument that the Press should be unlimited. To which I answer Two ways.

1. By

1. By way of Concession ; we do easily grant that the Invention of Printing hath proved very beneficial to the Christian Church : 'Tis this, which hath diffused the knowledge of useful Arts and Sciences, and all sorts of humane Learning : 'Tis this, which hath furnished our Libraries with vast Numbers of excellent Books : 'Tis this, which hath furnished our Churches and our Families with great Store of Bibles ; and we easily grant, what this Author asserts, that to this Art of Printing we owe, under God, the happy and quick Progress of the Reformation.

But 2. By way of denial, we cannot grant that the usefulness of the Press is a good Argument, that its Liberty should be unlimited. For notwithstanding these great Advantages, which both *Religion* and *Learning* have reaped from this curious Art of Printing, may not it, as well as many other things, very useful in their own Nature, be so abused and perverted, as to become Instrumental to the great *Detriment* of Mankind ? 'Tis an old Rule, *corruptio optimi pessima* ; the better things are when well used, the worse they grow, when corrupted. The Sword is an excellent Instrument, when it *defends* the guiltless, but it proves an unhappy Tool, when it *murders* the Innocent. Physick, duly administred by a Learned Physician, may *preserve* a Life ; but being misapplied by an ignorant Mountebank, it tends to *destroy* it.

'Tis certain that the Art of Printing hath done a great deal of *good*, and we are to bless God for it ; but withal, it is as certain, that it hath done, and still may do a great deal of *Mischief*, and we are to lament it. When the Press tends to promote *Religion* and *Virtue*, 'tis well employed, and ought to be *encouraged* ; but when the Press tends to promote *Vice* and *Irreligion*, it ought to be *discountenanced* and restrained. 'Tis evident that the Press hath been used to publish a great Numbers of such Papers, as tend to *debauch* the *Lives*, and *corrupt* the *Judgments* of Men ; such are our *obscene Poems*, our *profane* and *wanton Stage-plays*, where *Vice* is not only *represented* but so *promoted*, that we may justly fear, that as *all* their Spectators lose their *Time* ; so *many* of them may lose their *Innocence* too. For since the Hearts of Men are so prone to evil, and become so like to *sinder*, apt to take
Fire

Fire from every little Spark, 'tis hard to *see* those Vices, which are pleasing to Flesh and Blood, represented upon a publick Stage, and yet not be *infected* by them.

And as these are very like to debauch their *Spectator's Morals*, so are there many other printed Papers as like to corrupt their *Reader's Judgments*. Such are those many Volumes printed in Defence of *Popery*; and which is worse, such are those Books printed in the Defence of *Arianism*, *Socinianism*, and other *Heresies* justly condemned by the Catholick Church in the first and purest Ages of Christianity.

'Tis reported that our modern *Socinians* have already perverted a considerable Number of Men, not only by their *personal Insinuations*, but by their *printed Papers*; and 'tis very probable, that they may yet make many more Profelytes to their dangerous Opinion, if the Press be still permitted to publish whatever they think fit to write. For their Books contain Arguments so plausible, so seemingly strong, that they may pass for clear Evidences and Demonstrations amongst the unlearned Multitude, who are in no capacity to discover the Fallacies that lie in them. Now, since the Press may as well do *harm* as *good*, 'tis very reasonable that it should be well regulated to *promote* that *good*, and *prevent* that *harm*; 'tis very fit that no new Books should be *published*, till they have been first *supervised* and allowed.

But to whom ought the Care of this be committed? Doubtless to Men of *Integrity*, *Learning* and *Judgment*; to Men, who are able, at first view, to distinguish *Vice* from *Vertue*, and *Truth* from *Error*; and with such Men is the Church of *England* stored; Men of such Parts and *Piety*, that we cannot without breach of Charity, so much as once suspect, that they would, to gratifie any Party, stifle any Book, which might tend to the *advantage* of the Christian Church, or the common benefit of *Mankind*.

Notwithstanding this, our Author thought fit to tell his Friend, the Parliament-Man, that of all other Persons, the *Clergy-men* of our Church, are the most unfit to be trusted with the Regulation of the Press; and for that, he gives this Reason; namely, because they would allow no Books to be published, save only such as tend to establish their own Opinions;

nions; that is, in plain English, they would permit no Books to be printed, which tend to subvert the fundamental Articles of the Christian Faith; and for that, Who can justly blame them?

That the Articles of the Church of *England* are Sound and Orthodox, hath been proved over and over by such Scripture Arguments, as Priests and Jesuits, *Arians* and *Socinians*, or any other Heretick, never yet could, nor ever can overthrow; and if any Books, which contradict them, be offered to the Press, 'tis fit they should be *stifled* in the *Birth*; and if they chance to be *brought forth* by stealth, 'tis fit they should immediately be cast into the *Flames*, that being the quickest way to *cleanse* them from that *Dross* that is in them.

But however, to prevent as much as may be, the further increase of dangerous Books, which by good Words, fair Speeches, and seeming Arguments may do much Mischief amongst the illiterate Vulgar; 'tis very necessary, that all Writings offered to the Press about Matters of Religion, should carefully be *examined* by Conscientious and Judicious Divines; and that no general Liberty should be allowed to Men of all *Sects* to *write*, and to *Printers* to *publish* whatever they please.

Tit. i. 11.

There are amongst us in this unhappy Age, Hereticks of several denominations, of whom St. Paul saith, *Their mouths must be stopped*; and for that he gives a very just Reason, when he tells us, *They subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not*. Now, if there ought to be a Muzzle clapped upon the *Hereticks mouth*, there is far greater Reason that there should be a restraint upon his *Pen* and *Press*. For 'tis impossible that any Heretick should do so much Mischief with his *Tongue*, as he may by his *Writings*; words only *spoke* and heard are *transient*; but words written and *printed* are *permanent*; an *heretical Tongue* can do no harm but by a *personal Conference*, but an *heretical Pen* may do much Mischief to Men at a *distance*; the wrong that may be done by *heretical Discourse* alone, can reach but the *present Age*; but *heretical Books* may injure and poyson the Souls of Men in *after Ages*. And since there are too many such Books published amongst us, it is the great Concern, and should be the great Care of our Governours, to see that there be no more,

more, lest if their Number increase without controul, they may by degrees, considering the ignorance, instability, and credulity of Men, subvert the *Faith* of the Son of God, and endanger the *Souls of Men*. But,

S E C T. III.

2. **T**HIS Author argueth for an unlimited Liberty of the Press, not only for its own great *Usefulness*, but from the Consideration of several grand *Inconveniences*, which, as he saith, would follow, should the Press chance to be restrained; and the first which he names, is this.

First. *The restraint of the Press tends to make Men blindly submit to the Religion they chance to be educated in, and to take it up without any trial.* To this I answer thus;

This Argument may hold in *Popish Kingdoms*, where the People for want of means, cannot; and, for fear of their Inquisitors, dare not examine the Principles and Practices of the *Roman Religion*. But the same Argument pleaded in, and against the *Church of England*, is of no Force; for it proceeds upon a false Ground, and hath a Fallacy in it; for here is, *non causa pro causa*; the restraint of the Press is here assigned as the *Cause*, or at least the great *Occasion*, that Men take up their Religion upon Trust, though indeed it be not so.

The matter of this Charge is true, and as it cannot be denied, so it is much to be lamented, that great Numbers of Men, even amongst us, do indeed take up their Religion barely on Trust. Protestants they are, but why are they such? only because it was the *Religion* of their *Parents*, that wherein they were trained up from their *Childhood*; 'tis the Religion established by our *Laws*, generally professed in our Nation, and preached in our Churches. These, I fear, are the only Motives, upon which the far greatest Part of Men do, by a blind and implicate Faith, take up their Religion.

There is a vast multitude of Men, who are constrained thus to take up their Religion upon trust, by an *invincible*

Necessity; Men, who were never blest with a liberal Education, never taught to read; Men so dull and stupid, that they cannot *apprehend*, much less remember the Strength of an Argument; and surely Persons under such ill Circumstances, are in no Capacity to *judge for themselves*, but must *rely* upon the Judgment of their *Teachers*, and upon their Credit and Authority, take up some Religion or other, or else they can take up none at all; and this is the great unhappiness of many Thousands, I fear, even in the Church of *England*.

But besides these, there is another sort of Men bred up in the Principles of Learning; Men of compleat Knowledge and good Ability to judge betwixt Vice and Vertue, Truth and Falshood; and how frequently, how earnestly, do we
 x Theff. v. 21. exhort such Men from our Pulpits, *to prove all things, to try the Spirits*; but, alas! 'tis much to be feared, that we lose our Labour, that Men will not spare any time, nor take any pains to examin their Religion, but rather take it up at a venture just as they find it.

1 Joh. iv. 1.

Now, if a Man takes up his Religion upon trust, when he *need not* do so, he runs himself both into *sin* and *danger*; a *sin* it certainly is, because a *breach* of those fore named *Commands*; and a great danger it is, because instead of a *Juno*, he may embrace a *Cloud*; instead of a *true* Religion, he may *close* with a *false* one.

But where lieth the Fault? Upon whom, or what, must this sin be charged? Sure I am, that in this case a restraint upon the Press is innocent, and cannot be justly blamed; For, were not Men obliged to examin the Matters of their Religion long *before* the Art of *Printing* was invented? And was not the neglect of this Duty a sin in former Ages, when there was not so much as one Press in all the World? And if so, How could the trial of Religions depend upon the Press in those early days, when as yet it had no being?

And because the true Christian *Faith* is the *same* in all the Ages of the Church since the Apostles days, we must measure our *own* Religion by the same Rules, by which the Primitive Saints measured *theirs*, and what were they? Not the voluminous *Writings* of *Men*; which the Press hath now brought

brought forth, but the sacred *Oracles* of God. This is the Course, to which the Prophet directs us; *To the law, and to the Testimony*. This Course did the *Bereans* take, when to examine the Doctrines even of the Apostles themselves, *They searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so*; and for their doing so they are highly commended.

And indeed the Scripture is the *lapis Lydius*, the *Touch-stone*, the Canon, the only Authentick Rule of *Manners, Faith,* and religious *Worship*; a Rule so plain and easie in all necessary points, that in order to the trial of our Religion we have no absolute need of any Book but Gods, though other good Books do well towards the better understanding of some passages in this.

'Tis the great Privilege of our Church that we have this Rule of Scripture in such great Quantities, that every Man, who can and will, may, at an easie rate, have it in his custody, and thereby examine his Religion, when he pleaseth. Nor can we justly blame the restraint of the Press, so long as it is permitted to Print our *Bibles*, and prohibited to publish no *Man's* Book, but such only, as are contrary to *Gods*.

Indeed, were the Press in *England* restrained, as it is in *Popish* Kingdoms, from printing the Bible in our *Vulgar* Tongue, this Authors Argument would have had much strength in it; but since it is otherwise; since we have the *Scriptures*, those *Tests* and *Standards* of our Religion, preached in our *Publick Churches*, and easily to be had and read, as oft as we please, in our *private Families*, this Author's Argument against the Restraint of the Press is invalid and un-concluding; for it doth not prove that, for which he pleads it. But to proceed.

S E C T. IV.

II. **T**HE Second Allegation, which this Author urgeth, as a grand inconvenience, against the Restraint of the Press, is this; *Such a Restraint, saith he, deprives Men of the most proper and best means to discover truth.* To which I answer thus;

There:

There is a very close Connexion betwixt this Argument and the former; a Connexion as between an Antecedent and a Consequent; or between the Premises and the Conclusion. In the former Argument he mentions the examination of Religions; and in this, as the end and consequence of that, the discovery of Truth; for to what purpose should any Religion be impartially examined, were it not to discover, whether it be true or false. And for this reason, the same answer, which I have given to the former Argument, might serve well enough for this; for since the restraint of the Press doth not, as I have there proved, prevent the due Examination of Religion, it cannot prevent the discovery of Truth.

But that so it doth, our Author is very positive; yea, and he tells us by what means it doth so, namely, *By hindering Men from seeing and examining the different Opinions, and the Arguments alledged for them.* But let this Author tell us, how this can be true; can a Restraint of the Press for time to come hinder any Man from seeing and examining the different Opinions of Men, and their Arguments for them! Are there not already great numbers of printed Books, exposed to common Sale, wherein the different Opinions of Men about matters of Religion are thoroughly discussed! May not every Man, that will and can, sufficiently inform himself by Books already extant what Arguments have been pleaded by all Sects of Christians in the defence of their respective Professions? And since the Press hath already brought forth such a numerous issue of this kind, methinks every future birth of the same sort would be but a *Superfetation*. I am persuaded, that should all the Presses in the Christian world be absolutely forbidden to print any more New Books of Controversy, and Polemick Divinity, it would be no injury to the Catholick Church, nor to any one Member of it; for, *nihil dici potest, quod non dictum est prius*; Prints indeed may be new, but Arguments, either for old Truths, or against old Errors, can hardly be so.

But when all is done, Religious Truths cannot be discovered by Humane Arguments any further than those Arguments are grounded upon the *infallible word of God*. 'Tis a Rule in Mathematicks: *Rectum est index sui & Obliqui*. He, that would

And this Rule, in all Points necessary to Salvation, is so plain and easie, that every Man, who hath not lost the use of common Reason, may thereby judg for himself. There are indeed in the word of God, as the Apostle saith, *Some things* 2 Pet. iii. 16 *hard to be understood*; but in what Texts do these difficulties lie? St. *Austin* answers, *Non quoad ea, quæ sunt necessaria saluti* Ep. 3. T. 2. p. *luti*; &c. The Scriptures are not difficult in any of those Points, which are necessary to Man's Salvation. So thought St. *Chrysostom*, who thus demands; *τίς ἐκ τῶν δόγμα τῶν ἐν ἐκείνῳ ἀποστόλῃ* Orig. in Laz. T. 1. p. 244. *what Man is there, to whom all the necessary Truths of the Gospel are not clear and manifest*? He saith elsewhere; *Τὸν υἱόν, καὶ τὸν πατέρα, καὶ τὸν ἁγίον, καὶ τὸν ἀποστόλον, καὶ τὸν ἐκκλησίαν* In Mat. Hom. *ἀποστόλου, καὶ τὸν ἐκκλησίαν, καὶ τὸν ἐκκλησίαν, καὶ τὸν ἐκκλησίαν*. The Husbandman, 1. p. 5. the Servant, the Widow, the Boy, Persons of very mean Capacities may easily understand what the Scriptures teach about such Points. as are Fundamental.

That this was the Doctrine of the Primitive Church before St. Chrysostom's time, is evident from that Testimony of *Irenaeus*; *Universa Scripturae & Prophetiae & Evangelicae in aperto, & sine ambiguitate, & similiter ab omnibus audiri possunt.* The whole Scripture, the Prophets, the Evangelists, in such Points as most concern us, are so plain, exprest, and open, that all sorts of Men may equally apprehend them. Iren. l. 2. c. 4.

Now, if a Man may discover the truth of all those Doctrines, which are necessary to Salvation, by Scripture Rules; if his Faith be grounded on them, and his Practice be suitable to them; what hazard would that Man run, should he never see the different Opinions of Men about them, nor weigh their Arguments against them? Suppose a Man being well informed by the express word of God, do stedfastly believe the Resurrection of the dead; what were this Man the worse, should he never see nor examine the reasonings of Pagans and Sadducees against this great Article of our Creed. Suppose

pose a Man be convinced, as well he may be, by such Texts of Scripture, as cannot, with any tolerable Sense, be otherwise interpreted, that our Blessed Saviour is truly God, and truly Man; What need such a Person to see the Opinions, and weigh the Arguments of *Arians* and *Soci-nians* against this fundamental Point of our Christian Faith?

To him, whose Belief is already grounded upon the infallible Word of God being rightly understood, the sight of different Opinions, and the Arguments for them signifieth nothing; such a Man doth not need the confutation of heretical Cavils to confirm that Faith of his, which is already bottomed upon a Rock, which is immoveable. And as the sight of different Opinions, and the examination of Arguments pleaded for them, is not *needful* to confirm a *strong* and well grounded Faith; so it is *dangerous*, and tends to *impair*, and shake a *weak* one. For, well meaning Christians, bred up in the true Religion, being of too easie Belief, of slender Judgments, and not well acquainted with the Word of God, may probably be perverted by heretical Books, as being unable to discern the Fallacies contained in them, and to cite such Texts as might confute them.

But here it may be demanded, Who must judge, whether such or such an Opinion be justified or condemned by such or such a Text? I answer, where Texts are plain and obvious, every discreet and intelligent Person may judge for himself; but when Texts are somewhat abstruse and difficult, when knotty Questions and Controversies are raised about them, then the Judge must be no single Person; no, nor any small Party of Men, who are byassed, prejudiced, and wedded to their own Opinion, but the Judge must be the Catholick Church; I mean, its Representative in the four first general Councils, which consisted of Men not over-aw'd by Authority, nor tempted by Interest; but Men as Religious, as they were Learned, as well Versed in Holy Writ, as able Interpreters of Scripture, as any sort of Men, born since those early days. And this, I think, to be the greatest human Authority to warrant the Sense of such and such Texts, and prove the Doctrins grounded on them.

Now,

Now, Since we of the Church of *England* are blest with the free use of our Bibles; and favoured with the judgment of the best Expositors about the sense of those Texts, which tend most to determine those Disputes, which have arose betwixt Protestants and Papists, betwixt Trinitarians and Anti-Trinitarians, we can have no need, of any search for Truth, to consult the printed Papers of this Age, many of which do tend to *promote Error* much rather than *discover Truth*. And verily when the Licensor of Books doth reject and suppress Heretical Papers, he doth good service both to God and Men; and if such Papers chance to *Steal* the Press, they ought to be treated like *other Thieves*, who, to prevent their doing any future mischiefs, are *Apprehended, Condemned, and Executed*. And so I quit this Argument, and proceed to the next.

S E C T. V.

3. **T**HIS Authors third Allegation against the restraint of the Press runs thus, *The Restraint of the Press binders Truth from having any great influence on the minds of Men, which is owing chiefly to examination; because that which doth not convince the Understanding, will have but little, or no effect upon the Will.* I answer thus.

What this Author doth here assert in relation to the influence of the Understanding upon the Will and Affections is true in general; nor can it be justly denied that a strict examination of Religion is the proper means to convince the Understanding of its Truth.

But although the subject matter of this Allegation be true in the general; yet here it is misapplied and very impertinent to the Case now in hand. For this Argument, as the former did, doth proceed upon a false Hypothesis; for it supposeth that if the Press should chance to be restrained for time to come, Men would be deprived of all sufficient means for the due examination of their Religion.

'Tis St. Paul's Command, *Prove all things.* 'Tis St. John's Command, *Try the Spirits, whether they are of God.* These Commands must needs suppose, that in those days there was

a certain Rule, by which Religions might be tried; and the same Rule, in its full force and vertue, is standing still. Tell me then, are our *Bibles* out of Print, or taken from us? Have we no *Catechisms*, no *Systems of Divinity* left amongst us? Nay, are there not *Books of Controversies* exposed to Sale in our Cities, greater Towns, and both our Universities? Nay more, are there not *Popish* and *Sacian Catechisms* to be had in *England*? Do not these Books already Extant, contain the strongest Arguments, which the most learned Men of all Parties were able to urge in favour of their respective Opinions? And may not Men by weighing these Reasons, which are already made publick, give a judgment which Religion is true, and which is false, as well as by any new Papers yet to be printed?

But although there be a great variety of Books, which may help to guide us in our searching after Truth; yet I must still mind my Reader that the Scripture is the only *Adequate* and *Authentick* Rule, whereby the *Truth* or *falsehood* of any Religion must be determined. And certain it is, that those *Convictions* of Man's *Understanding*, which arise from the *Immediate* word of God, are like to have a more powerful influence upon the *Will* and *Affections*, than any other *Convictions* arising from any such *Arguments*, as are no more than the Dictates and Collections of *humane Reason*, which is fallible, and may deceive us, whereas the word of God, well understood, cannot do so. And this, I think, is a sufficient answer to this Authors third Allegation.

S E C T. VI.

4. **T**HE Fourth is this, *The Restraint of the Press is that, which tends to make Men hold the Truth, if they chance to light on any, Guilty; and the Reason, which he gives is this; Because that will not be accepted, if it be not the effect of an impartial Examination.* To which I answer thus:

I cannot pass by this without observing that this Author hath hitherto much harped upon the same thing, and hath hitherto bottomed all his Arguments upon the same Ground, and a very slippery one too; he hath proposed his Allegations.

tions as *distinct* in their *Number*, but in their *Proof*, there is little or *no difference* to be found.

For he tells; *First*, That the Restraint of the Press tends to make Men blindly submit to the Religion they chance to be educated in. *Secondly*, That it deprives Men of the most proper and best means to discover Truth. *Thirdly*, That it hinders Truth from having any great influence upon the minds of Men. *Fourthly*, That it tends to make Men hold the Truth, if they chance to light on any, guiltily.

These indeed are very considerable Objections against the Restraint of the Press, were they true; But how doth our Author prove them so to be? To prove them all, he hath yet made use but of one *medium*, and that a false one too; for 'tis nothing else but a groundless supposition that Men would want due means for the examination of their Religion, were the Press any whit restrained. I say, any whit; for we do not plead for a total Restraint, but for a just and due Regulation. And were the Press so regulated, yet would it not be attended with any of these ill Consequences, with which this Author is pleased to charge it; for since Men have sufficient means for the trial of their Religion, if they do it not, their sin and folly must be imputed, not to the *Restraint* of the Press, but to their own *Ignorance* or *Negligence*; for, as some cannot, so others will not. But our Author goeth on, and so must we.

SECT. VII.

5. **T**HIS Author's fifth Allegation against the Restraint of the Press takes up more than three Pages, but the full Substance of it is this; *It prevents Acts of Charity to the Souls of Men, it invades the natural Rights of mankind, and destroys the common Ties of humanity*; so he.

This is Dogmatically and Magisterially delivered, and since it is such a grievous Charge, it had need be very well proved; And how doth our Author make it out? He tells us *That all Men are obliged, especially in Matters of Religion, to communicate to one another what they think is the Truth, and*

the Reasons by which they endeavour to prove it : To which I answer thus.

That we are indeed concerned, not only to *profess* a Religion, but promote it too ; I think, that he, who hath one jot thereof, will never deny. We are bound by several Obligations to instruct and teach our Neighbour in the Principles of that Religion, which we own our selves. St. Paul commands it, *Edify one another ;* and so again, *Teach and admonish one another.* We are engaged by the frequent Commands of God, and that eternal Law of Charity, in our Capacities, and as occasion is offered, to propagate our Religion ; to plant it where it is not, and to water it where it is.

But then methinks, before we do this, we should, not only *think*, as this Author saith, but *secure* our selves and others too, that the Religion which we advance in the World, be indeed the Religion of God ; we must be sure that we plant not *Weeds* instead of *Flowers*, that we sow not *Tares* instead of *Wheat*. For to promote a Religion, which may possibly be false, were a desperate Venture indeed, and he that doth it, hazards the Honour of God, and the Souls of Men.

I find that our blessed Saviour and his Apostles taught no Doctrine, but what they were sure of ; *We speak that we know*, saith our Lord ; and thus St. John, *We know that we are of the Truth.* Certainly, whosoever undertakes, and is obliged to instruct another in matters of Religion, had need be very well informed himself.

For if our Directions should chance to prove wrong, What Excuse could we make ? Suppose we instil into the minds of Men *Error* and *Heresie* instead of *Truth*, What were this but to *ruin* the Souls of Men, though we might think to *save* them ? It's true, our good Intention and Ignorance may excuse such an ill Act, *a tanto*, but though such a mistake may somewhat extenuate the Fault, yet can it no way lessen the fatal Consequence that doth attend it. Suppose a Physician, who really intends to *cure* his Patient, by a mistake of his Remedy, should chance to *kill* him, the poor Patient, who dieth only by a mistake, suffers as great an injury, as if his Physician had poysoned him knowingly, and with design. 'Tis indeed an Act of Charity to instruct the Ignorant, and
lead

Thess. v. 11.

Joh. iii. 11.

Joh. iii. 9.

lead the Blind; but withal, the Man who undertakes it, must have *Eyes* in his own Head, lest if the *blind lead the blind*, they both fall into, and perish in the Ditch. Certain it is, we are much engaged very strictly to fit the Grounds of that Religion, which we are to propagate in the World, and teach our Neighbours, lest otherwise, through our *own mistake*, and *his confidence*, we become guilty of *cruel Charity*, and prove instrumental to *damn* that Person whom we should endeavour, as far as we can, to *save*.

And as it is a dangerous thing for private Persons to promote any false Religion, though they themselves being mistaken, do think it true; so to permit other Men to publish heretical Doctrins cannot be the Duty of those Persons, who have Authority, and should have Zeal, to prevent it. To restrain this unchristian Liberty of the Tongue, Pen, and Press, is not, as this Author doth boldly assert, *To invade the natural Rights of mankind, nor to destroy the common Tyes of humanity*. For if it be a Man's natural Right to persuade his Neighbour, either by his *Tongue* or his *Pen*, to entertain an Opinion really heretical, whether he thinks it so or not; 'tis also his natural Right to *draw* him into *Sin*; for if he prevail, that will be *finis operis*, though not *operantis*; it will be the *issue* of the *Act*, though it were not the *intention* of the *Agent*.

We cannot doubt but that *St. Paul* very well understood what natural Right every Man hath to use his Tongue, and in what cases he ought to do it, and thereby to communicate his Thoughts to his Neighbours; but suppose a Man's Thoughts be wild, and his Opinions heretical, must he be left at Liberty to impart such Thoughts, and vent such Opinions, even as he pleaseth? See what *St. Paul* saith concerning Hereticks, *Their mouths must be stopped*; i. e. they must not be permitted by personal Conferences to communicate their ill Opinions to *inform*, or, which is all one, to *corrupt* the Judgments of other Men; so thought *St. Paul*. Now, he who pleads for an universal Liberty, as the natural Right of all Mankind, to communicate to other Men, whatever they *think* to be a Truth, whether it be so or not; must censure *St. Paul* as a Man, either ignorant, or else an invader
of

of Men's natural Right, since he so positively declares that some Men's Mouths must be stopped.

Tit. iii. 10. And in order to this, the same Apostle gave Bishop *Titus* this Direction, *A man that is an heretick, after the first and second admonition, reject; i.e. excommunicate him, cast him out of the Church; and certainly, if the Person of an obstinate Heretick must be rejected, his Books may not be admitted; for, as to his Person, his Breath is infectious. His words eat like a Canker; and as to his Writings, there is in his Ink more Poisons than one.*

2 Tim. ii. 17.

Now, since there are so many heretical Pens at work amongst us, there is great need now, if ever, that some spiritual *Argus* should attend and watch the Press, lest more venomous Doctrins should steal from thence to infect and kill the Souls of Men. And this, I think, is a sufficient Answer to this Author's fifth Allegation.

S E C T. VIII.

6. **T**HIS Author's sixth Allegation against the Restraint of the Press is this; *There is no medium between Men's judging for themselves, and giving up their Judgments to others.* We grant it, but what then? His Inference is this, *If the first be their Duty, the Press ought not to be restrained; But why not? His Reason is again the same, because it debars Men from seeing those Allegations, by which they are to inform their Judgments: That's his Argument, to which I answer thus:*

We must distinguish betwixt Man and Man, betwixt such as can judge for themselves, and such as cannot, where the Scripture is express, the Words plain, and the Sense easie; every Man who hath a competent use of Reason, and can read his Bible, may judge for himself. But when several Interpretations are given of any Texts, when Doubts are raised, when Arguments are produced to defend both Parts of a Contradiction; there is a vast number of Men, who are no more able to judge which is true, and which is false, than a blind Man is to distinguish betwixt a good Colour and a bad one.

'Tis

'Tis the great unhappineſs of ſuch Perſons, that in matters of Controverſy they cannot rely upon their own weak Reaſon; but muſt either ſuſpend their Judgments, or elſe give it up to the Conduct of ſome other Perſon, and who is ſo fit to be truſted with it, as their own Miniſters? provided they be, as every Miniſter ſhould be, Men of Piety and Parts, able to ſatiſſie Doubts, remove Scruples, and convince Gainſayers.

But if Men give up their Reaſon to the *Clergy*, this Author, who vilifieth our Clergy as much as poſſible he can, gives our People an intimation, that by ſo doing, they make us, *the Lords of their Faith*; But how doth that follow? ſuppoſe two Perſons are engaged in a doubtful Controverſie about an Eſtate claimed by both, theſe Perſons being of themſelves unable to determine the Caſe, appeal to the King's Judges, but do they thereby make thoſe Judges the Lords of that Eſtate which is contended for? ſurely no, the Judge doth no more than according to Evidence and Law, declare to which Perſon that Eſtate doth juſtly belong.

So it is in our preſent Caſe, ſeveral Parties of Men lay Claim to Truth as theirs, and produce Evidences for it; Now, a Man unable to ſatiſſie himſelf which ſide Truth is to be found, conſults his Miniſter, who, by Evidence of Scripture, which in this caſe is the only Law, aſſures his Neighbour the Truth lieth here or there.

And indeed that the Miniſter is the moſt proper Judge in Controverſies relating to Religion, we cannot doubt, if we dare believe the *Prophet*, who ſaith, *The Priſt's lips ſhould pre- ſerve knowledge, and they ſhould ſeek the Law at his mouth, for he is the meſſenger of the Lord of Hoſts.* Mal. ii. 7. This Text doth not conſtitute us, nor do we pretend to be Lords of our People's Faith; but as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Helpers to the Truth*. We do not require any weak Believer's aſſent to any one Article of Faith, whereunto God requires it not, though the Church of Rome doth ſo: And how unjuſtly then, without Modeſty or Truth, doth this Man ſigmatize us, as *Lords of our People's Faith*?

But beſide thoſe weak Chriſtians, who in controverted Points cannot judge for themſelves, there are ſome other of clearer Heads, and more improved Underſtandings that can;

can; and for their sakes this Author saith, that the Press ought not to be restrained, and his Reason is this; *Because the Restraint of the Press debars them from seeing those Allegations by which they are to confirm their Judgments.*

This Argument, in effect, hath already been offered once and again, and hath as often been replied to; but for the greater satisfaction of my Reader, I shall again consider and enlarge my Answer to it, and this it is: Not knowing and intelligent Christian, who is well able to judge for himself, can want any new Allegations from the Press to confirm his Judgments in any disputed Points of Faith or Worship, because we have already sufficient Rules to judge by: For,

1. We have the *Scripture* preached in our publick Churches, and if we please, we may read and consider them in our private Families and Closets.

And here I do again affirm that all matters of revealed Religion must be examined, proved, and determined by the written Word of God. This is the only sure *balance to weigh*, and *touch-stone to try* all Matters of Faith and Worship. To this our Lord sent his hearers, *Search the Scriptures*; and again, *How readest thou?* And, which is remarkable, the ignorance of Scripture did he make the only occasion and ground of Error in Points of Faith; so he told the *Sadducees*, *Ye err, but why? not knowing the Scriptures*; by which our Lord himself proved that great Doctrine of the Resurrection, which they denied. And when our Lord would prove himself to be a greater Person than *David*, he did it by that Text, *The Lord said unto my Lord, &c.* This course took our blessed Saviour, and so did his Apostles too, and so must we; we must take the Scripture for our Guide in Matters of Religion, for that is the only and infallible Rule and unalterable Standard, to measure all the Doctrines and Practices which such or such a Church doth teach, recommend or require from us.

But if it shall be again demanded, who must be the *Judge*, whether amongst different Interpretations of Holy Writ this or that be the true one; whether in controverted Points such or such a Text do certainly warrant such or such a Doctrine, as is grounded thereon, I answer again.

2. We

John. 7. 39.

Luke x. 26.

Matt. xxii. 29.

Psal. cx. 1.

2. We have the united *Judgment* and *Decrees* of several *Councils*; those, I mean, that were convened in the first and purest times, before the Superstitions and Idolatries of *Rome* had crept in by degrees thro' carelessness, vice, and ignorance, and over-spread the Church.

The grand Controversie, now on foot amongst us, concerns the *Divinity* of *Christ*, the *Personality* and *Deity* of the *Holy Ghost*; that *Christ*, in the most strict and proper Sense of that Notion, is *truly God*; that the *Holy Ghost* is a *Person*, and a *Divine Person*, we affirm; but our *Socinians*, who are the *spawn* of old *Arius*, make bold to deny. To justify our Doctrine we cite such and such Texts; and to establish their Opinions, as well as they can, they do the same thing; as for the Scripture, which we produce to prove the Doctrine of the Trinity, because humane Reason cannot comprehend it, they do either question the *Authority* of such Texts, or else they *wrest* them to such an intolerable Sense, as every sober Man's Reason may justly abhor. Now, the Question is, Who must judge betwixt us and them? Who must determine, whether the Scripture be on their side, or ours? I answer,

That Heterodox Opinion, now much contended for, which we call *Socinian*, did appear under some other Names, very early in the Christian Church: In the first Age the Godhead of *Christ* was denied by the *Jews*, and particularly by *Ebion*; in the Third Century by one *Theodatus*, *Artemon*, and *Beryllus*, and *Sabellius*; in the Fourth Century, by *Arius*, *Eunomius*, and some others. And in the same Age, the *Personality* and *Divinity* of the *Holy Ghost* was denied by *Macedonius* and some others, who were there branded by a particular Name, and called, *Περὶ ἁγίου πνεύματος ὀπίστητοι*, *Oppugners* of the *Holy Ghost*.

These Heterodox Opinions beginning to spread and disturb the Peace of the Christian Church, and some other ill Opinions arising too, several General Councils were summoned by several Christian Emperors; the *Nicene Council*, by *Constantine the Great*, whose main work was to examine the Opinion of *Arius*; the Council of *Constantinople*, called by *Theodosius* the First, to debate the Opinion of *Macedonius*; the Council of *Ephesus*, called by *Theodosius* the Second, to con-

sider the Opinion of *Nestorius* ; and the Council of *Chalcedon* summoned by the Emperor *Martian*, to consult about the Opinion of *Eutyches*.

These Councils consisting of some Hundreds of Bishops, having the Glory of God in their Hearts, the Settlement of the Church in their Eyes, and the Bible in their Hands, did after a mature deliberation, pronounce the Opinions of these Men to be contrary to the Doctrine of the Gospel, and the obstinate defenders of them to be *Heresicks*. And certainly the determinations of these General Councils, which were made up of Persons *exemplary* for their *Piety*, and *eminent* for their *Learning*, who resolved on nothing without mature Advice and Deliberation, are of as great Authority, and afford as much Satisfaction in Matters of Religion, as any thing of *Man* can be or do. For the Truths of God, once taught the World by Christ and his Apostles, being unchangeable for ever ; and our Bibles, which are the only Rule to measure Religions by, continuing one and the same for ever ; that, which was an Error in those early days, must needs be an Error still ; and that, which was a Truth then, must needs be a Truth now. And if we cannot think of any more proper means for the right understanding of Scripture, and the discovery of Truth and Error, than the deliberate and unanimous Judgment of so many hundred pious, learned, and unbiassed Men assembled together ; then certainly the determinations of those antient Councils are very considerable Evidences *for Truth*, and *against Error*. And the rather, because they consisted of such Persons, who, besides their eminent Piety and Learning, had the great Advantage of living nearer the Apostles age, and thereby were the better able to inform themselves and us, what was certainly believed and done in the very infancy of the Christian Church.

S E C T. IX.

3. **T**HE Writings of the *Antient Fathers*, those especially that lived within the first six Centuries, wherever they agree, and are not since corrupted or maimed by the Frauds and Forgeries of the *Roman Church*, are of singular use in this Matter too.

That *Ignatius, Clemens, Origen, Athanasius, Cyril, Nazianzene, Basil, Chrysostom, Hierom, Austin*, and many others both in the Eastern and Western Churches, were indeed Persons of great Piety and excellent Parts, our *Socinians*, without breach of Modesty, cannot deny. And although some of these great Names, in some particular Matters, had their peculiar mistakes, and shewed themselves to be but Men; yet in all Points where we find an unanimous Consent amongst them, we are to have so much Veneration for their Authority, as not easily to suspect or contradict it.

True it is, if we take these Fathers singly, Man by Man, where we find any of them *alone* in their Opinions, as *Origen* in reference to the *Punishments* of Hell; and *St. Austin* in reference to *Infants* that die unbaptised; we are not in this case much more obliged to accept their Judgment, than the Judgment of some single Person yet alive. But if we take *All* the Fathers, who lived within six hundred Years after Christ, together and in a lump, where we find them *One* in Judgment; they are enough to make a wiser Council than any hath been since their time; they are enough to inform us what is Error, and what is Truth. But,

S E C T. X.

4. **B**ECAUSE Learned Men, whose Fortunes are Mean, cannot *purchase*; and unlearned Men, whose Intellectuals are weak, cannot *read* and understand the voluminous Writings of the Fathers; we have several *Systems* of Divinity, Confessions of Faith, short Abridgments of Christian Religion, which are, especially to unlearned Persons, great helps in this matter too.

And here methinks those antient Creeds of the *Apostles*, *Nice*, and *Arbanasius*, which are so generally received by the Church of God, are of great Authority to settle our Judgment in the main and most necessary Points of Faith. Besides, we have many Choice and Excellent *Catechisms*, composed by Men that were Pious, Judicious, acquainted with Scriptures, well versed in the Primitive Councils and Fathers. These short Catechisms, compiled by Persons of singular Endowments, and approved by the Church, are little less than *contracted Bibles*, containing in them whatever Man is obliged to know, and delivering enough in easie Terms to inform us in Matters of Practice, to secure us from Errors, and confirm our Judgments in all the great Points of Faith.

In short, the substance of my Answer to this Argument is this; since we have the written Word of God to be our Rule, and since this Word, in some material Cases, according to the different *Fancies* and *Interests* of Men, hath different Interpretations given concerning its true Sense and Meaning; 'tis our safest way, for our better Satisfaction, to betake our selves to the most able, faithful and unbiassed Judges; and they are the most *antient Councils*, and the *Primitive Fathers*, whose Judgments are declared in our several Creeds, in other publick Confessions of Faith, and Orthodox Catechisms set forth or approved by the Church of God.

And since we are very well stored with these excellent Helps, I do once more conclude that no Man, whether learned or unlearned, can need any *new* Arguments from the Press to confirm his Judgment in Matters of Religion.

S E C T. XI.

7. **T**HIS Author's seventh Allegation against the Restraint of the Press runs thus. *If it be unlawful to let the Press continue free, lest it furnish Men with the Reasons of one Party as well as the other, it must be as unlawful to examine those Reasons.* To this I answer thus;

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We must distinguish between Party and Party; between one, who is *Orthodox*, and one who is *Heretical*; this distinction being premised, I shall resolve this Hypothetical Proposition into these two Categorical ones. That it is not lawful for many Orthodox Christians to Examine those Reasons, which Hereticks may urge in defence of their ill Opinions. And therefore that the Press should not be permitted to furnish such Christians with any such Reasons,

'Tis notoriously known that there are amongst us vast numbers of Persons, who are of weak Judgments, not firmly established in their Faith, not able to distinguish Truth from Falshood in a fallacious Argument, and therefore are apt to be *Tossed up and down by every wind of doctrine*: now, for such Men to peep into Heretical Books, cannot be lawful, because they do thereby run themselves into a very *dangerous Temptation*.

Our Lord hath left us this Caution, *Beware of false Prophets*; it seems they are dangerous Men; so we are told again and again: *They creep into houses*, and there find success, for, 2 Tim. iii. 6. *They lead Captive silly women*; and again, *They overthrow the faith of some*; nay, *They subvert whole houses*; it seems that Tit. i. 11. Heresie is a contagious Disease, apt to over-run whole Families.

And doubtless this Poyson may be conveyed in a *piece of Paper* as successfully, as any other way; this infection may be received as well by the *Eye* from a *Book*, as by the *Ear* from a *Tongue*; for when unlearned Men meet with *Socinian Arguments*, drawn either from *Humane Reason*, or *abused Scripture*, since they themselves cannot confute them; they are apt to yield up their own Reason, and give up those Truths for lost, which they are not able to defend.

And I think that it will be no breach of Charity, if I tell my Reader that I am verily persuaded, that the great Reason, why this Author pleads so many Arguments, though no good ones, for the unlimited liberty of the Press, is this; namely, that our *Socinians* may without controul publish their Books full of *subtile*, but *fallacious Arguments* to Surprize and Captivate the Judgments of illiterate and undiscerning Men. We know, that in the late Reign an *Universal Liberty of Conscience* was pleaded for, and granted by a Declaration upon a design,

sign to bring in *Papery*; so now an universal *Liberty* of the *Press* is contended for by those Men, whose design it is to introduce *Socinianism*, the very worst of Heresies, for it totally subverts the very Foundation of our Christian Faith and Hope.

Indeed, to my best observation, this Author hath not, in his whole Letter, so much as once named *Socinian*, nor drop'd one plain word in favour of it; but yet, *Latet anguis in herba*; This was very prudently done to prevent *Suspicion*; but if he be not a Man of that sort, why doth he tell us, that if the *Press* must be Regulated, it must be done by some *Lay-man*; for which he can have no substantial Reason, save only this, namely, because from a *Clergy-man* no *Socinian Book* can ever expect an *Imprimatur*. But this, is *mesdy* only by the way.

In short, the substance of my Answer to this Allegation is this, 'Tis not lawful for Men of *weak Understandings* to mind subtle Arguments contained in Heretical Books, lest thereby they might be *ensnared*; and for that Reason, the *Press* should not be permitted to publish any such Books, unless security could be given that they should never come into *Vulgar* hands.

S E C T. XII.

8. **T**HIS Authors Eighth Allegation against the Restraint of the *Press* is this. *The Press ought not to be Restrained, because the Reformation is wholly owing to it.* I answer,

There is no liberty denied to any *English Press* to publish any Book, which tends to *help the Devotions*, to reform the *Lives*, or confirm the *Judgments* of Men in the true Faith of Christ; but as for the *Established Religion* of our Church in matters of Faith, and Worship, it is so well refined already from the *drags of Popery* and Superstition, that we do not need another *Luther*, nor the help of any *Press* to reform and make it better. He that would reform our *Religion* in any of its substantial Parts, must reform the *Scriptures* too; for our Church teacheth no other Doctrines in the great Points of Faith and Worship than Christ and his Apostles taught the World,

World, if we may believe those Sacred Writings, which they have left us. But since I have already, under another Head given a sufficient answer to this Allegation. I need not here say any more about it.

S E C T. XIII.

9. **T**HE Ninth Allegation, which this Author urgeth against the Restraint of the Press, is this; *Our Divines condemn the Popish Clergy for not suffering their Laity to read Protestant Authors*; We do so, and very justly too, but what then? The Inference, which he intends, must be this; *Our Protestant Clergy must be Condemned for not suffering our Laity to Read Socinian Books, and for watching the Press to prevent it.*

To this I answer thus; this Inference is, a *Non Sequitur*, it is wild and extravagant; for there is a great difference in the Case: the prohibition of Books may be an Act either to be *blamed* or *commended* according as the Books prohibited are either *really good* or *really bad*; to forbid Men the use of such Books, as tend to the *benefit* of Mankind, the advantage of True Religion, and the Salvation of Souls, is an Act *Impious* and *Tyrannical*. And this is the known Practice of the *Roman Church*, which forbids *Lay-men* to Read the *Bible*, and the Writings of such *Protestant* Authors as teach nothing but what the Scriptures teach, and for this do we very justly Condemn them.

But on the other Hand, to forbid injudicious Men the use of such Books, as tend to promote *Errors* and *Heresies*, to *restrain* their Readers Judgment, and rather to *shake* their Faith than to *confirm* it, is an Act *laudable*, Charitable, and necessary for the Age we live in, for those Predictions of Christ and his Apostles; *false Prophets shall arise*; and again, *false Teachers shall be among you*, are fulfilled in these times; for there are amongst us *Romish Priests* and *Jesuits*; yea and some far more dangerous than they: I mean, our *Socinians*, who cannot corrupt so many Souls by their *Personal Conferences*, as they may by their *Books*. And is it not high time to watch the Press, lest any thing steal from thence, which may *Poyson* the Heads of unwary Men? Or must the Press be permitted freely;

Matth. xxiv. 11.
2 Pet. ii. 1.

freely to spread that destructive Heresie, which hath been long since Condemned by the Catholick Church and its Representatives met in General Councils ?

But here this Author, to justifie his own Opinion, Cites a *learned Divine* of our own Church, and borrows this Passage from him, *They that have a good Cause, will not fright Men from considering what their Adversaries say against them, nor forbid them to Read their Books, but rather encourage them so to do, that they may see the difference between Truth and Error, Reason and Sophistry with their own Eyes, &c.* That we may see how little service this Passage doth our Author, let us view it again. *They who have a good Cause*, but who are they ? We cannot doubt, but this good Man meant the Church of England, of which he himself was a very worthy Minister ; but what saith he of this Church of Ours ? *It will not fright Men from considering, &c.* but what Men ? This eminent Divine was the Lecturer of Gray's Inn, where his *Auditory* did chiefly consist of such Persons, as had been blest with a *learned Education*, and might Charitably be presumed to be well skilled in the Law of God as well as in the Law of Man.

Now, that this judicious Divine of ours did mean, that the Church of England would rather encourage than forbid Persons so qualified to read and Examine the Books of our Adversaries as well as our own ; to me seems evident from that reason which he subjoyns as the only end of an impartial Examination, namely this, *That they may see the difference between Truth and Error, Reason and Sophistry, with their own Eyes* ; This Expression doth plainly import the Persons fit to Read Books of Controversie in matters of Religion are only such as have *Eyes of their own, i. e.* clear Heads, enlightened Understandings, able to discern Truth from Falshood.

And verily could the Books of our Socinians be confined within the Libraries of *learned and judicious Men*, whether of the Clergy, or of the Laity : could they be surely kept from *purblind Eyes* and *weak Judgments* ; that unlimited liberty of the Press, which this Author doth so earnestly contend for, were the more allowable. But since this can never be, since Heretical Books are and ever will be exposed to common Sale ; though the Church of Rome doth ill in restraining their

Laity

Laity from the use of *good Books*; yet the *Church of England* would do very well in restraining the Press from putting *ill ones* into the Hands of unskillful Men, where they would be more dangerous than *edge-Tools* in the Hand of a Child, who knoweth not how to use them. And so much in answer to this Objection.

S E C T. XIV.

10. **T**HIS Author begins his Tenth Allegation thus: *I cannot see how they, that are for tying Men to that Interpretation of Scripture, which a Licenser shall approve, and therefore put it in his power, to hinder all others from being published, can with any Justice condemn the Popish Clergy for not Licensing the Bible itself for the Laity to Read.* I answer,

Here are two Suppositions, both which are either impertinent to us, or false in themselves; if the *Church of England* be not the Persons here charged, the Charge is impertinent; but if they be, it is false. For,

1. The *Church of England* doth tie none of her Members to that Interpretation of Scripture, which such or such a Licenser of hers shall approve.

'Tis well known that we have many Interpretations of the Scripture, which never were under the Inspection of any *English Licenser*; the Expositions of the Fathers, Schoolmen, and many other Divines are brought us from beyond the Seas, and the free choice and use of them is allowed us by our Church. And if such Books chance to be Reprinted here in *England*, the care of the Edition is committed, not to the Licenser of Books to judge of their *matters*, but to the *Composer* and *Corrector* of the Press to see to their *Forms*, Character, and exact truth of Printing.

Now, if this be so, as indeed it is; if we are allowed to consult various Interpreters of our Bibles, if we may take our Choice of such or such Expositors, and use what Editions we please; why should this undeserved imputation be cast upon the *Church of England*, as if she tied all her Sons to such Interpretations of the Holy Scripture, as her own Licensers shall Authorise?

2. The Church of *England* doth not give her Licensers a *Despotic, Arbitrary, and Absolute* Power to reject every Book, every Interpretation of Scripture, which doth not please them.

'Tis certain that our Licensers do not act by any immediate and *independent* Power of their *own* ; but as *Delegates* and Substitutes by an Authority derived from their Superiors, and if any of them shall either *allow* any Book, which tends to *mischief* ; or *suppress* any Book, which tends to *common good*, they do abuse their Power, exceed their Commission, and must answer for it.

But is the miscarriage of some few Licensers an Argument that they should all be laid aside? Some Kings have proved cruel Tyrants. Some Judges have been corrupted, and must we therefore have neither King nor Judge? Sure I am that in this Age of ours we do sufficiently need a discreet and able Judge of Books: and the Test and Censure of such a Judge no Man need fear more than our *Socinian Writers* ; for they, being no great *Friends* to the *Scripture*, are very odd *Interpreters* of it, not through *Ignorance*, but *design* ; I will not say, through *Rancor* and *Malice* ; but I will say, through *Partiality* and *Prejudice*. For, because the beginning of *St. John's Gospel*, and several Expressions in *St. Paul's Epistles*, being rightly understood, and in the sense of the *Catholick Church*, do totally overthrow their dangerous Hypothesis ; they fix upon those Texts such Interpretations as are *abildish, absurd*, and even *ridiculous* ; such, as none of the *Fathers, Schoolmen*, or *Criticks*, so far as I can find, did even think of. And what an ill Cause do these Men manage, who endeavour with handfuls of *dirt* to stop the *Mouths* of those *Witnesses*, who, being permitted to speak their own sense, do so loudly proclaim their united Testimonies against them?

And methinks this one Consideration, were there no more, is enough to justify our Church in appointing some fit Persons to be the *Judges of Books*, and the *Interpretations* of Scripture offered to the Press ; and the rather, because if any Licenser should out of any by-respect, or for any sinister end, *stifle* any Papers, which *deserve* to see the light ; the injured Authors may appeal from the *Licenser* to the *Vice-Chancellors* in
either

either of our Universities, or to the *Lord Bishop of London*, or to his *Grace the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury*; so that the fate of Books doth not ultimately depend upon the pleasure or sole Judgment of a Licensor.

Now, Those two forenamed Suppositions, upon which this Author bottoms this Tenth Allegation, proving false, the Superstructure, which he builds upon them, falls to the Ground, and there I leave it.

S E C T. XV.

1. **T**HE next Allegation against the Restraint of the Press this Author thrusts into the Mouths of other Men, and makes them say what perhaps he himself doth not think: namely this. *'Tis no small presumption that the Clergy themselves are Conscious of the falseness of their Religion.* How! the Clergy, whas! the whole Clergy? Are *ten thousand* of us at once presumed to be *Hypocrites*, Juglers, and gross Dissemblers with God and Man? We, who teach Men that a false Religion leads towards Hell, do we know our own to be false, and yet embrace it still? The Martyrs of *England* in *Queen Mary's* days died for the *same Religion*, which we now profess, and were they also Conscious that this Religion is false, and yet in the *defence* of it shed their blood?

Certainly this Presumption is *not small*, but very strange; 'tis a great breach as well of *Charity* as of *Truth*; for, if the Scriptures be true, and who dares suspect them? We are abundantly convinced that our Religion cannot be false; and why then should any Man presume that we have indeed other thoughts concerning it? The Reason here given is this; *Because the Clergy dare not suffer their Religion to undergo a fair Trial*, but do what they can to *stifle* all the Reasons that can be urged against it. But, Sir, Pray tell us, can any *sound* Reason be ever urged against a Religion, such as ours is, Instituted by Christ, Taught by his Apostles, Embraced by the *Primitive Church*, and Sealed by the Blood of thousands of Martyrs.

But 'tis not strange to hear Men speak against the very best of *things* or *Persons*; for our Lord told his Apostles,
 Matth. v. 11. *Men shall revile you, and say all manner of evil against you.*
 Thus were their *Persons* treated; yea, and their *Doctrine* too.
 Act. xiii. 45. *The Jews spake against those things, which were spoken by Paul.*
 Ps. cxxxix. 20. Nay, the Psalmist tells his God, *They speak against thee*; and what wonder then if they speak against his *Religion* too?

But what do they speak? That, which this Author styles *Reason*, is but *Pretence* and *Sophistry*; and were such Pretences, though never so *plausible*, yet being *fallacious*, buried in perpetual Oblivion, and stifled for ever, what harm were in it? What one single Soul would be the worse?

But our Author replieth, that when there is a Contest between Men of two different Opinions, they have not fair Play, if their respective Reasons be not heard equally on both sides; we grant it, what *Seneca* saith, is true.

*Qui statuit aliquid, parte inaudita altera,
 Equum licet statueris, haud equum fuit.*

Well, the main Parties, now contending, are the *Church of England*, and our *Socinians*; and have not these Men very often been heard already? their Opinion, and their Arguments for it, being much the same with those of the *Old Arians*, have been frequently debated, all their Witnesses have been heard, all their Evidences have been maturely Considered, Baffled, and Overthrown, and Condemned by several *Councils*, by many pious and learned *Fathers*, by a great number of worthy *Divines*, by *Papists*, by *Protestants*, by *Calvinists*, by *Lutherans*, by all sorts of Christians; but themselves.

Now, when a Cause Condemned by several able and impartial Judges, at several times, and in several places, is, by a Bill of *Revival*, renewed and brought upon the Stage again with the self-same Witnesses, and the self-same Evidence; if the Proper Judges, to free themselves and others from a great deal of needless trouble, should reject and cast it out of the Court without any further Hearing, I think there would be no foul play in doing so.

But

But we have not treated our modern *Socinians* thus; For did any of them ever desire a personal Conference with any of our Learned Divines, and was rejected? Did any of them ever provoke the professors of Divinity in either of our Universities, to a publick Disputation, and was refused? Are not their Writings and ours to be seen, and had in many Shops in *London, Oxford, Cambridge*, and other great Towns and Cities? Have they not received our printed Answers to their printed Objections? If they have, Why should this Author complain for want of fair Play? Why should he unworthily tell the World, that we dare not suffer our Religion to undergo a fair Trial, for fear it should prove False?

No, we do not doubt the *Truth* of our Religion, nor the *Ability* of our Church to defend it; but our Lord tells, *False* Matt. xxiv. 11 *Prophets shall deceive many*; and St. Peter saith, *They shall* 2 Pet. ii. 2. *bring in damnable Doctrines*; and yet he tells us, *Many shall follow their pernicious ways*. These Texts do make us jealous that many weak, easie, and credulous Men may be corrupted by the *Sophistry* and *Fallacies* of *Socinian* Arguments, which, for that Reason should not be published.

But, may our Author reply, and in effect he doth so, What danger can there be in publishing such Arguments, since, if they be *false*, we have great store of Divines able to confute them? We have so, and blest God for it; But what then? Must we permit the Souls of Men to be *poisoned*, because we abound with *Sovereign Antidotes*? Must we permit the Church our Mother, or her Sons, who are our Brethren to receive Wounds in their Heads, because we have Balsam enough to Cure them? We would take a better course than so, and follow the old Rule, *venienti occurrere morbo*, prevent the Poison, and then we need not use any Antidotes; prevent the Wound, and then there is no need of Plaisters; so here, if we can, by a due Regulation of the Press, prevent the spreading of *erroneous Doctrines*, there will be no need of *Confutations*.

But if Men of restless Spirits be still permitted to disturb the Peace of our Church, and stagger the Faith of weak Believers, by publishing Arguments, which only seem to be plausible, against the Fundamental Articles of our Creed,

we

we shall be concerned to spend *more time*, and blot *more Paper*, in returning just Answers to them; we must not *quit the Field*, so long as there are *Enemies* in it. And so I pass from this Paragraph to the next.

S E C T. XVI.

12. **T**HIS Paragraph begins thus; *It may be objected, saith he, (and very justly, say we) that by such a Latitude, People may be seduced into false Religions, or into Heresies and Schisms.* The Truth hereof, this Author doth not deny; but though it should be so, yet he insinuates, that there would be but very little or no Danger in it; for, thus he tell us, *If two Persons profess two different Religions, the one a True, the other a False one; yet if they have been equally sincere in their Examination, they are equally in the way to Heaven.* This Assertion, were it true, would be very comfortable to all lober *Jews, Turks, and Pagans*, who have been serious in examining the Grounds of their respective Religions; and yet I cannot think them equally in the way to Heaven with all such *Christians*, as have done as much. And 'tis easie to believe, that those Christians, who, after an impartial search into Scripture-Truths, do own the *Divinity of Christ* and the *Holy Ghost* as fundamental Articles of our Faith, are in a much fairer Capacity of Salvation, than our *Socinians*, who, after all their Examinations, embrace a Doctrine contrary to the Faith of the Catholick Church, *even denying the Lord that bought them; a Doctrine, which St. Peter styles, Damnable.*

Pet. ii. 2.

phel. iv. 54

St. Paul tells us, *There is one Faith, one true Religion, and no more; and this one true Religion is the only right Path, which leads towards Heaven; and he, who is mistaken in the Choice of his Religion, is like a Traveller, who, after all his enquiries, mistakes his way; and if he continue under that mistake, he hath little hopes to attain his desired Journey's end.*

But

But to justify this strange Paradox, this Author subjoins this Reason; *two such Persons, the one after a due examination, professing a true Religion; the other a false one, are equally in the way to Heaven, because in following their Reason, they both have done what God requires.* That's his Argument; but there's a fallacy in it; for, doth not God require, and doth not Reason oblige us, in order to our Salvation, to obey one Command as well as another? One Command is this, *prove all things*; another immediately follows, *hold fast that which is good.* Now, if one Man obey the first of these Commands only, and another obey them both, they do not equally do what God requires, nor consequently are they equally in the way to Heaven.

And this is the Case of two Persons, who, after an equal Examination, hold two different Religions, the one a True, and the other a False one; the Obedience of the one is only, *secundum quid*, he obeyeth but this single Command, *prove all things*; but the other obeyeth this and that too, *hold fast that which is good*, which a False Religion can never be. And if so, How can two such Persons be in an equal Capacity of Salvation, except a *wrong* way do as directly lead to Heaven as the *right* one?

There is another Assertion in the same Paragraph, which I cannot pass over without some Reflections upon it, and 'tis this; *The perverse holding of Religion; i. e. taking it up on trust, whether it be true or false, is Héresie.* This definition of Héresie is to me a new one, and repugnant to many old ones, which I have met with.

It is true, the different Opinions of the old Philosophers, whether True or False, are indifferently stiled by Epiphanius, *οἱ ἑτεροδοξοῦντες Ἀπίστοι*, the Héresies of the Philosophers. But in Matters of Religion, this word, Héresie, is very seldom, if ever, used in any Sense, but a bad one; the Evangelist mentions the *Seet*, in the Greek, *Αἵρεσις*, the Héresie of the Pharisees and the Sadducees, an Expression, which doth no way commend them. Nor did the *Jews* intend the credit of the Christian Religion, when they called it, this *Seet*, or as it is in the Original, *Αἵρεσις αὐτῶν, this Héresie.* And as for the *Pagans*, many of them had as bad an Opinion of

Epiph. Her.
8.

of it, and stiled it, *Ἀθεῖον Ἄδω*, an Atheistical Hereſie; ſo Eusebius.

Sure it is, the word is now generally used in an ill Sense, and doth necessarily imply nothing else, but an *unsoundness* and tenacity of Opinion, about Matters of Religion; accordingly the old *Canon Law* of the *Greek Church* defines an *Heretick* thus; ὁ μὴ ὢν ἐκ ἐδάδου, one that is not right in his Judgment. The Council of *Carthage* describes them thus; οἱ μὴ δεξιζοντες ἐκ δὴς τῆ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, Hereticks are they, who have wrong apprehensions about the Christian Faith. *Tertullian*, defines *Hereſie* thus, *quodcumque adversus veritatem sapit*, whatsoever makes against, not the Laws of God, but his Truth; accordingly an *Heretick*, in the Language of *Hesychius*, is this, ὁ ἄλλο τι παρὰ τὴν ἀλήθειαν αἰετῶς ἔχων, one that chuseth some Opinion besides, or against the Truth.

These Definitions of Ancient Divines inform us what their Thoughts were concerning *Hereſie*; namely, that it was nothing else but an Opinion held against some Truth. But this late Author is of another mind, for he tells us, *That the taking up a Religion on trust, though the true one, is Hereſie, and according as Men are more or less partial in examining, they are more or less heretical.* But if this be so, then must the Nature and Essence of Truth depend on the bare act of Examination, which cannot be, because Truth will remain Truth, whether it be examined or not; the strictest Examination doth not constitute Truth, but only makes it evident.

Indeed he, who takes up a true Religion barely upon trust, may be to blame; but his Fault is not *Hereſie*, but *Negligence* and *Disobedience*; 'tis not, as *Hereſie* is, an *Errour* in point of Judgment, but a *Sin* in point of Practice; 'tis not the Violation of a *Doctrine*, but the *Transgression* of a *Command*. So that whatever Title we may give such a Man, we cannot justly brand him with the Name of *Heretick*.

But

But yet our Author, from these foregoing Premises, infers this as an *Epiphonema*, or granted Conclusion; so that 'tis not, *what a Man professeth*; but, *how, that justifieth or condemns him before God*; No. Is the *what* excluded? And is the, *how*, all? Suppose a Man profess the Religion of *Mahomet* with the greatest *Devotion* that can be, would not the *what* condemn him, or would the *how* excuse him? Suppose a *Few* with the highest *Reverence* should have offered up a *Swine* instead of a *Lamb*, would not the *what*, the *matter* of his Sacrifice, notwithstanding its exactest *manner*, have rendered it abominable? The Truth is, God considers both the *what* and the *how*, the *substance* of his Worship, and its *circumstances* too; and if so, Why doth this Man tell us, 'tis not the *what*, but the *how*?

And now being wearied with pursuing this Author through so many impertinent Allegations against the Restraint of the Press, I shall take my leave of him when I have propounded two Arguments against that unlimited Liberty of the Press, for which he is so zealous an Advocate, and and that, I fear, upon an ill Design; and my first Argument is this.

I. Since this unlimited Liberty of the Press would certainly be, as this Author himself doth not deny, an inlet to Schisms, Heresies, and a great variety of Opinions and Practices in Matters of Religion; the allowance of it can never consist with that Command of God, contend earnestly Jude 3. ly for the Faith once delivered to the Saints.

This Text supposeth that the true Faith, or which is all one, the true Religion, is but one; and that for that one, we are to *Contend*, and that *Earnestly* too: Now, to allow an unlimited Liberty to the Press, which will open a wide Gap to introduce false Religions, is so far from a contending for the one true Faith, that it is indeed a contending against it; and therefore such an allowance is a direct breach of this Command.

2. Since this unlimited Liberty of the Press would certainly prove an in-let to Schisms, Heresies, and false Religions, the allowance of it would be contradictory to the Judgment and Practice of the universal Church in all Ages.

It is true, the Church of Christ in all Ages had not the use of a Press, but if the late Art of Printing, without any due Restraint should prove a means to introduce an inundation of Heresies; the allowance of such a Liberty, and those numerous Errours, with which it would be attended, would be diametrically opposite to the Judgment and Practice of the Catholick Church from one Generation to another.

Now, the Question which relates to the Case in hand, is this; How did the *Primitive* Saints deal with those Men, who differed in Opinion from the received Doctrine of the Catholick Church? They followed St. Paul's Rule, 2 Tim. 2. 25. *In meekness instruct those that oppose themselves*; they did so, they used all gentle and rational means to reduce them; but when this would not do, What course took they then? Did they indulge them? Did they give them an universal Liberty of Conscience? Surely no; and to prove this, three Things shall be shewed. First, That an *unlimited Toleration* of all Opinions and Practices in the Matters of Religion, is contrary to the Judgment and Practice of particular Learned Men in the *Primitive Church*.

Tertull. ad
Scapulam.

Pamel. in
Locum.
Tertull. in
Scorp.

Tertullian, indeed tells us, *Non Religionis est cogere Religionem, quæ sponte suscipi debeat, non vi*; the owning of any Religion ought to be free, not forced; and 'tis best, that it should be so; but lest this Expression should be made use of, as Pamelius words it, *ad sectarum licentiam*, as a License to Hereticks; the same Tertullian saith elsewhere, *ad officium Hæreticos compelli, non inlici dignum est*; it is fit the Hereticks.

ricks should be *compelled*, not *allured*, to do what becomes them.

St. Hierom saith of *Herese*, *scintilla statim, ut apparuerit, Hieronymus i* *extinguenda est*, the very first spark of it should not be *extinguished*, but *extinguished*; and how far he was from countenancing ill Opinions, is evident from his Epistle to *Riparius*, where he calleth his opposing the Heresies of those times, *Christi bellum*, the War of Christ. And *Feuarden*. *Feuard. in* *tius* tells us, *Gloriatur Hieronymus se hæreticis nunquam perrensi Prefa* *percisse*, St. Hierom glorieth, that he never spared any Hereticks.

That great Man St. *Austin*, who was very tender of punishing Men for their Opinions, did yet write several Epistles to the Governours of several Provinces, which bear this Inscription, *De moderatè coercendis Hæreticis*, wherein he doth beseech them to *Refrain* Hereticks, not by *Capital Punishments*, but by some gentler Corrections. That Sentence, which *Dulcitius* pronounced against the *Donatists*, St. *Austin* thought too severe, and so do we; *August. in E* *noveritis vos debite morti dandos*, know that ye must die, 61. as ye deserve; such *sanguinary* Courses are very improper means to reduce Hereticks; they are inconsistent with our Lord's Designs, and cannot be reconciled to that Command of his, *Compel them to come in, that my* *Luk. xiv. 23.* *house may be filled*; the Compulsion, here required, must be such, as tends to *recover* Men, not to *destroy* them; and certainly to send them out of the *World* by bloody Laws, were a strange way of bringing them into the *Church*. That Expression of St. *Paul* will never warrant such a course; *Galatians 5. 12.* *I would they were even cut off, which trouble you.* He doth not wish they were killed with the Sword, but only cut off from the Church by *Excommunication*.

But although *sanguinary* Laws may not be executed, unless it be in case of professed *Atheism*, gross *Idolatry*, or downright *Blasphemy*, yet for the restraint of other Opinions and Practices, which corrupt the Doctrine, and disturb the Peace of the *Catholic Church*, some gentler Punishments have been used, and in *St. Austin's* Judgment, still ought to be.

In short, all those Learned and Pious Men, who were so renowned in former Ages, *Athanasius*, great *St. Basil*, *Irenaeus*, and many others, have declared to all succeeding Generations, that they did not approve of a general Toleration of all Opinions and Practices in the Matters of Religion. For, why else did they write so vehemently against the ill Opinions of *Arim*, *Eutyches*, *Nestorius*, and other Hereticks, concerning whom *Cyril of Jerusalem* gave every Orthodox Christian this Advice. *μὴν, εὐδίζε, μὴ χαίρειν λέγε*, *abhor them, avoid them, do not so much as once salute them; so he.*

2. 'Tis certain that an *universal Liberty* of Conscience, an *unlimited Toleration* of all Opinions and Practices in the Matters of Religion, is directly contrary to the *Decrees* and *Canons* of ancient *Councils*, and that we may see in a few Instances; as,

1. The *Decrees* and *Canons* of *Councils* did not leave Men to the Liberty of their own Consciences, as to the use of both the *Sacraments*.

The *Council* of *Carthage* established this Canon in reference to Baptism, *εἰς τὴν μυστήριον βάπτισμα ἀποβαίνοντες, ὅσοις ἐν τῇ βαπτίσμῳ λέγεται, ὅτι ὁ θεὸς ἐν ἡμῖν ἐστιν, ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ζωὴν δίδων*, whoever denieth that little *Infants*, newly born, ought to be *baptised*, let him be *accursed*, or *excommunicated*.

And

And as to the other blessed Sacrament, there is a Canon, ascribed to the *Apostles* themselves, which runs thus, *Πάντες οὐκ ἀφίενται πρὸς τὴν ἁγίαν Κοινωνίαν, ἢ τὴν ἁγίαν εὐχάριστον, μὴ παραβήσαντες τὴν Ἀγία μεταλήψιν, ἀφείλαντες χεῖρ.* All Christians, who come to the Publick Assemblies, and there hear the Scriptures; but stay not to receive the Holy Communion, ought to be Excommunicated, and so thought the Council of *Antioch*: Τὸς ἀποσπορεύοντες τὴν Ἀγίαν μεταλήψιν ἀποβλήτους γινώσκου τῆς Ἐκκλησίας. They, who turn their Backs upon the Holy Communion, ought to be cast out of the Church. And the Council of *Sardica*, as *Zonaras* tells us, did, by a Canon of theirs, Excommunicate all Persons, who abstained from the Holy Sacrament: ἐν τρεῖς ἡμέραις for three Lords Days together.

Apost. Can. 9

Conc. Antioch Can. 2.

2. The Decrees and Canons of Councils did not leave Men to the liberty of their own Consciences, as to the observation of the *Lords day*.

Concerning this the Council of *Laodicea* thus Decreed, 'Οὐ δεῖ χριστιανὸς Ἰουδαῖον, ἢ ἐν τῷ Σαββάτῳ φαγεῖν, καὶ ποτεῖν, καὶ ἢ χριστιανὸς Ἰουδαῖον, ὡς χριστιανὸς' no Christian ought to act like a Jew; and rest upon the *Saturday*; but to prefer our *Lords days*, and rest in them; and as for such as should transgress this Canon, the Council passed this Sentence upon them; Ἐστω Ἀνάθεμα τοῖς χριστοῖς, let them be accursed of Christ: nor was it left as a thing Arbitrary for Men commonly to Fast upon the *Sunday*, if a *Clergy-man* did it, ἐκδιώκεται, let him be deposed or degraded; if a *Lay-man* did it, ἀφείλαντες, let him be Excommunicated; so say the *Apostles Canons*.

Conc. Laod. Can. 19.

Apost. Can. 66.

3. The Decrees and Canons of Councils did not leave Men to the liberty of their own Consciences, as to the use of Publick Churches, and the frequenting of Sacred Assemblies held therein.

The Heretick *Eustathius*, in the fourth Century, despising Publick Churches, taught his Followers to Pray and perform other Acts of Divine Service in private *Conventicles*. Against this Practice the Council of *Gangra* Established their Canons.

'E1

Conc. Gangr.
Can. 5. & 6.

Εἰ τις διδόναι τὴν εἰσὶν ἐν Θεῷ συγκοινωνίαν ἴδῃ, καὶ πῶς ἐν αὐτῷ
συλλέξῃ, Ἀνέστηκα ἔγω· and again, "Εἰ τις πᾶσι τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν ἡμῶν ἴδῃ
ἐκκλησιάζει, &c. If any Man teach, that the Church and So-
lemn Assemblies met therein, are to be despised, and if any
Man shall set up Private meetings for the Worship of
God without Licence from his Bishop, let him be ac-
cursed.

These Canons, and many more to the like effect, are
undeniable Evidences, that the Councils of the Primitive
Church were far enough from being favourers of a general
Toleration of all Opinions and Practices in Matters of Re-
ligion.

3. 'Tis certain that an Universal Toleration of all Opini-
ons and Practices in matters of Religion is contrary to the
Judgment and Practice even of the Roman Church itself.
What their judgment is in this case, we are informed from
the Learned Men of their Communion; *Lorinus*, one of their
Jesuites, intimates his Opinion, as well as his Authors, when
he saith, *Hæreticos rectè Clemens exterminandos præcipit: Cle-*
mens did justly command *Hereticks* to be rooted out. *Tho-*
mas Aquinas, their angelical Doctor, delivers his Opinion
concerning *Hereticks* very roundly thus; *Non solum ab Ec-*
clesia per Excommunicationem separandos, sed etiam per mortem
à mundo excludendos; Hereticks deserve not only to be ex-
cluded from the Church by Excommunication; but also
from the World by Death. *Bellarmino*, their most illustrious
Cardinal, spends a whole Chapter in proving, that *Here-*
ticks, *posse ac debere temporalibus poenis, atque etiam ipsa mor-*
te mulcari; that incorrigible *Hereticks* not only may,
but must, suffer Temporal Punishments, yea and Death
itself. But there is no Man, that speaks more fully to this,
than *Maldonat*, another *Jesuite*, who expressly saith, *Com-*
burendi tanquam proditores, & transfuge discedentes Hæretici:
Hereticks, who depart from the Church, are to be burnt, as
so many *Traitours* and *Renegadoes*.

Lorinus in
AB. 10. v. 30.

Aqu. 2. 2. qu. 11.
Art. 3.

Maldonat. in
Luc. 9. v. 15.

And

And whom he means by these Hereticks, he elsewhere tells us, *Calvinistas & Lutheranos Hæreticos esse quis non videt? nullus nunquam Hæreticus fuit, nullus Hæreticus esse potest, si illi Hæretici non sunt*: who doth not know, that Calvinists and Lutherans, Protestants of both Denominations, are Hereticks? If they are not, no Man ever was, nor can be, such; 'Tis boldly spoken, but never was, never will be prov'd. Maldonat. in Matth. 13. v. 26.

And 'tis worth our Observation, that the same Jesuit hath left the Kings of the Christian Church this advice; *Admonet Maldonat, in non licere illis istas, quas vocant, Conscientia libertates nimium nostro tempore usitatas Hæreticis dare*. I put Princes in mind, that it is not lawful for any of them to grant Hereticks, i. e. Protestants, any Liberty of Conscience, of which he complains as a thing too often done. Matth. c. 13. v. 26.

These instances are enough to teach us what are the Principles of the Roman Church, whereunto their Practice hath been so sutable that it may be a matter of dispute, whether Rome Pagan, or Rome Papal hath shed the greater quantity of Christian blood. And certainly, their Persecuting, Impoverishing, Imprisoning, Tormenting, Banishing, and Murthering so many Thousands, in England, Scotland, Ireland, France, and other places, barely upon the score of Religion, are very sorry Arguments, that they do really like any Toleration, what Hand so ever the Men of that Religion may have in ours.

4. 'Tis certain that an unlimited Toleration of all Opinions and Practices in the matters of Religion is directly contrary to the Commands and Edicts of good Kings both in the Jewish and Christian Church.

1. The good Kings of Israel and Judah did not permit all their Subjects to do, what they pleased, in the matters of their Religion. We cannot doubt, but there were in those days many Men of erroneous Judgments, who thought they did

Cor. viii. 7. did well, when they Worshipped God by an Image. St. Paul mentions, *συνεστειναι τῷ εἰδωλῷ*, the Conscience of the Idol, i. e. a false Opinion, that there was some thing of Divinity in it, and accordingly did such Men Sacrifice to it.

But was this Opinion and Practice allowed by any of their religious Kings, because it was suitable to the mistaken Consciences of some of their Subjects? did *Hezekiah*, did *Josiah*, nay did *Jebu*, grant a Publick Indulgence for the Worship of Idols, because many both *Laicks* and *Priests* were for it? It was so far from this, that, although a great number of their Subjects were too much inclined, and had been too long accustomed to it, they took care to root it out.

2. Nor was such an *Universal Toleration* of all Religions ever known in former Ages in the *Christian Church*, since the Religion of Christ was own'd by Kings and Emperors.

Sacr. l. 5. c. 7. Its true, *Socrates* tells us, that the good Emperor *Theodosius* did bear with the *Novatians*, but he bore with none besides; what he said to *Demophilus*, an *Arrian Bishop*, we have from the same Historian. *Εδῆναι σε ἐγὼ ἐκκλησίαν τῆς τοῦ κardinis*, I command thee to quit the Christian Churches.

Eus. Hist. l. 10. cap. 5. 'Tis also true, that the good Emperor *Constantine the Great* did once sign a *Royal Edict* for such a Toleration, the sum of which is thus Recorded by *Eusebius*, *ὁμοθυμῶν δὲ τοῖς χριστιανοῖς ὁ αὐτὸν ἐκκλησίαν ἀπέσπασεν τῇ ἀποστολῇ ἣν αὐτὸς βυλυσάμενος*. i. e. Let us give both to the Christians and to all others the free Choice of their Religion. And hereunto he added this Charge; *Μηδὲς τὸν ἑνὸς παρονομήσω, ἕως ἵνα ἡ ψυχὴ βλάτῃ, τῷ δὲ κρατερῶς*. Let no Man disturb his Neighbour in point of Religion, but let every one do as his Soul desires.

This,

This, indeed was *Constantine's* Act, and a wise Act it was, and all that could then be done, considering in what Circumstances he then stood; for, *Constantine* and *Licinius* were then Co-Emperors; *Constantine* favoured the *Christian Religion*, *Licinius* favoured the *Pagan Worship*: *Heathenism* was the Religion then Established by Law, *Christianity* was under Hatches; the *Pagan Religion* did not need a Toleration, the *Christian* did.

In such a juncture of time as this, it was very worthily done of *Constantine* to get the consent of his Colleague *Licinius* to a General Toleration of all Religions, that so the *Christian* might be Comprehended in it; and such a present Toleration did he procure in order to a future Establishment of the *Christian Faith*.

And that this was indeed his present Design is Evident from what he afterwards did; for, when he became the sole Emperor, and was well settled in the Throne, he made it his great business to suppress all false Religions, and Establish that of *Christ*; *Eusebius* tells us, that there was sent out by him a Law, *Επιτομή των νόμων τῆς αἰσεως καὶ ἀρετῆς ἀποκαταργησάσης*, Restraining the abominable Idolatries, that had hitherto been practised in Cities and Countries; and again *ὡς ἐντολὴν ἐξέδωκεν πάντας τοὺς αἰσῶνι*, the Law Commanded that none should dare to set up any Images. The same Historian saith, *Πύλαι ἐπαλειφόντο ὡς ἀκαθάρτοι*, by his Command the Gates of Idol Temples were shut up; Nay, another Historian tells us that he did, *ἀπὸ τῆς ἀρχῆς τῆς βασιλείας*, quite pluck down the Temples of *Venus*.

*Euseb. de vita
Const. l. 2 c. 43.*

*Euseb. de vita
Const. l. 4 c. 23.*

Socr. l. 1 c. 18.

And as he had no kindness for any ill Religions without the *Christian Church*, so did he give no Countenance to any *Sects*, and ill Opinions, which arose within it. That he Banished *Arian*, though *Beryllus* denies it,

we have the Authority of *Sozomen*, who saith, 'Ου πολλῶ
Soz. l. 2. c. 16. ὕστερον τῆς ἐκ Νικαίας συνόδου Ἀριὺς ἐπὶ τῷ Ἐκκλησίᾳ ἀπελύθη
 ἀνελθόν. *Arim* was called back from Banishment not
 long after the Council of *Nice*: and how he dealt with
 other Hereticks, the same Historian informs us, *Kaus*
Soz. l. 2. c. 32. τῶν νόμων διὰ τοῦ ἐ βασιλέως ἐπετίθησαν ἀπαγορεύσαι αὐτοῖς τὰς
 ἐκκλησίας τῶν αἱρέσεων, ἵνα μὴτι ἐν αὐταῖς ἰδοῦνται, καὶ τὴν ἀνακλῶν.
 By a Law he Commanded that the Oratories of Here-
 ticks should be took from them, and that they should
 hold no Assemblies either in Publick or Private places.

And as this good Emperor took care to root out all
*fals*e *Worship*, and to suppress ill *Opinions*, so did he by
 his Royal Authority promote the true Service of God. To
 that end, he set forth a Law for the observation of the
Lords day. So *Eusebius* tells us, Τότε καὶ τῷ Ποιμαντὶ ἀπέλα-
Eus. de vita *Const. l. 4. c. 18.* τὸν ἀρχιεπίσκοπον ἀπαγορεύειν τοῖς ἐκκλησιαστικοῖς ἐν τῇ κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ
 ἐκτελεῖν, or as the same Historian saith in another place,
 νόμον διευκρινίσας. He Exhorted, nay, by a Law he re-
 quired the universality of his Subjects to cease from all
 their worldly business upon the *Lords* daies, that therein
 they might attend the Exercises of Religion.

Certainly these and the like proceedings of his are in-
 fallible Evidences, that although this good Emperor
 did once, in *Christian Policy*, and for an excellent end,
 Sign a Royal Edict for a General Toleration of all
 Religions; yet, when it might be otherwise, he did not
 like it.

This Example of *Constantine* was followed by succeed-
 ing Emperors, *Πάτρις Ἀρκαδίου ἀνακτορικός*, saith *Justinian*;
Justin. in Ep. de fide Ortho-
doxa. we Condemn every Heresie, and lest the Books of
 Hereticks should transmit their ill Opinions to Posterity,
Theodosius and *Valentinian* did Command by a Law,
Balsam. in
Coll. Const. Ex
l. 1. Cod. ἵνα τὰ βιβλία τῶν αἱρέσεων ἐκκαίνονται, καὶ τὰς ἐκκλησι-
 αῖς ἀπαγορεύεται τὰς αὐτὰς ἀναγιγνώσκουσαν.

οὐ καὶ οἱ ἑσθλῶν ἀρετήν, saith the *Civil Law*, and it
 instances in several particulars, *Μακάριος ὁ ἐργαζόμενος ἐν τῷ λόγῳ*. *Blastaris Synag.*
 οἱ ἄλλοι οὐ γινώσκουσιν τὴν ἀρετὴν. *Ἀποστόλῃς Συναγωγῆς*. We decree *lit. A.*
 that Hereticks shall be incapable of any *Publick* Employ-
 ment, whether *Military* or *Civil*; nor might they be ad-
 mitted as *Witnesses* in their Courts of Judicature; *Ἀποστόλῃς*
 οἱ ἑσθλῶν καὶ ἀκατάστατοι. Let not an *Heretick's* Testimony *Blast. Synag.*
 be received against an *Orthodox* Christian; nay more, *Alphab. lit. A.*
Ἀποστόλῃς ἐν Συναγωγῇ καταγράφουσιν. No *Heretick* shall *In* *Idem ibid.*
beris the Estate of his Father. In short, we find *Here-*
ticks Deposed, Degraded, Banished, and sometimes Fined;
Witness that Law of *Theodosius*, mentioned by the Coun-
 cil of *Carthage*, which Enacted, that in some Cases, *Her-*
eticks should pay, as the Canon words it, *ἄνθρωπος ὁ καὶ ἡμεῖς*
ἀρετῇ, Ten Pounds of Gold. *Concil. Carth. Can. 96.*

Now, we do not Write this with any design to encour-
 age the Governours of our Church or State to exercise
 any Severity towards our sober and peaceable Dissenters,
 who differ from us only in the Circumstantial of our Re-
 ligion; but we mention these things to confirm our
 present Argument; and to shew, that our present un-
 limited Toleration of all Opinions and Practices in
 Matters of Religion, is quite contrary to the *Judgment,*
Usages, and Laws of the *Antient Church*, who punished
 such as held and taught Heterodox Opinions, and would
 not be otherwise reclaimed.

5. 'Tis certain that an unlimited Toleration of all O-
 pinions and Practices in Matters of Religion is directly
 contrary to the *Divine Law*, to the Will of God revealed
 in his written Word.

The *Jewish Church* was never permitted to teach and
 do, what they pleased, about the things of God; they
 were not allowed to serve their Maker, as they *Listed*;
 they were obliged to Sacrifice *when, where, and what*
 they were Commanded. It was not left to them, as a

matter of Choice, whether they would Circumcise their Infants, or not; no, the Law was this, *the Uncircumcised Man child shall be cut off*. Nor were they left to their own Liberty, whether they would come to Jerusalem to eat the Passover, or not; no, the Text saith of good Josiab, *The King commanded all the people, saying, keep the Passover*. We do not find any indulgence in matters of Religion granted to the Jewish Church by Almighty God, or any of their good Kings.

And as there is no such thing to be found in the Law or the Prophets; so there is very little or nothing to be met with in the whole Gospel, that gives any Countenance to such a Practice; the main place, which seems to look that way, is in the Parable of the Tares; of which 'tis said, *Let them grow until the Harvest*, what means our Lord by this? Is it indeed his pleasure, that ill Men, and ill Opinions, should be indulged and countenanced in his Church? St. Chrysostom gives us another Interpretation of our Saviour's words, *Koriden Argumtis dicitur in agros parum*, our Lord doth here forbid us to kill and slay; Hereticks; but is there no difference betwixt a Sword and a Rod? Is a Bridle and a Halter the same thing? The Heretick must not be destroyed, but may he not be restrained? St. Chrysostom answers thus, *Koriden Argumtis, et dicitur parum*, &c. & *koriden*, our Lord doth not here forbid to curb Hereticks, to stop their Mouths, to check their boldness, dissolve their Conventicles, &c. as he goeth on.

Tit. 1. 11.

Of the same mind was St. Paul, who saith, *Their Adornments must be stopped*; but how can that be done, if there may be no Penal Laws? And if an Universal Liberty of Conscience in Opinion and Practice about matters of Religion be indeed agreeable to the Gospel of Christ, what meant St. Paul by that demand of his, *Shall I come to you with a Rod?* &c. *et si non, et non habebis? nonne habebis? nonne habebis?* Shall I bring a Rod to whip and scourge you? So St. Chrysostom.

1 Cor. 4. 21,
Chrysost. in
locum.

And

And since St. Paul, who well knew the Mind of Christ, did, upon just occasion, make use of his Apostolical Rod to punish, not only Immoralities in Life, but Errors in Judgment too; we may thence infer, that an unlimited Toleration of all Opinions in Matters of Religion hath no manner of Countenance from the Law of Christ; we read, that St. Paul made use of this Rod, to strike Elymas blind; and why he did so, that Expression intimates, *Wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?* It was for his opposing the Gospel, and that in all probability arose from the Error of his Judgment. But the Case is yet more plain in the Example of Hymenæus and Alexander, of whom St. Paul saith, *I have delivered them to Satan*; a severe Punishment, *sure futuri judicii præjudicium*, 'tis a fore-stalling the dreadful Judgment of God. So Tertullian. But why did St. Paul inflict it? He gives this Reason, *Concerning faith they have made shipwreck*; or as he elsewhere expresseth it, *They have erred concerning the Truth*. It was for their ill Opinion about one Article of our Creed. Act. viii. 10.
1 Tim. i. 20.
1 Tim. i. 19.
2 Tim. ii. 18.

These Instances are enough to shew that a Toleration of all Opinions and Practices in Matters of Religion was never thought to be lawful, and consequently such an unlimited Liberty of the Press, as tends to bring in, and spread Errors and Heresies, ought not to be allowed.

And now I shall take my leave of my Reader, when I have admonished him, that in all this Discourse, I plead for the Regulation of the Press, as to such Books only, as concern Morality, Faith, and Religious Worship, of which, our Learned Ecclesiastical Governours are the most proper Judges. But as to Policy and State Affairs, they fall under the Cognizance of the Civil Magistrate, whose Province it is, and whose Care

Care it should be, to prevent the publishing of all such Pamphlets as tend to promote popular Tumults, Sedition, Treason, and Rebellion. And had this been carefully done some Years ago, it might have happily prevented those dreadful Confusions, under which our Church and State now do, and still are too like to groan.

Farewel.

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